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Filner Comments On The State Of The Union Speech

Washington, D.C.

Congressman Bob Filner released the below statement following tonight's State of the Union:

"I am pleased that strengthening our economy and creating jobs for all American families was the top of the President's agenda tonight.

"Our economy is beginning to look up, and it will take all of us coming together to build on that success. I agree with the President that in order to solve these problems we must work across party lines to improve the economy and create jobs.

"The President said tonight that his budget will increase investments in biomedical research, information technology and clean energy. These are industries where the San Diego region excels. Our technology companies have been on the cutting edge and investing in them will help them grow, innovate and further stimulate our economy."

"One of the best things we can do for our country is boost transportation funding to stimulate economic growth. Funding trans-

portation improvements can support jobs and ease the high unemployment rate, particularly in the hard-hit construction sector.

"Every \$1 billion invested in highway construction would support approximately 27,800 jobs, both in the construction sector and in non-construction related sectors of the economy.

"Every dollar invested in the nation's highway system yields \$5.69 in economic benefits in reduced delays, improved safety, reduced emissions, and lower vehicle operating and maintenance costs. And each dollar invested in the nation's public transit system has been found to provide \$6 in benefits in the form of time savings, parking and travel time savings, avoided job loss, avoided welfare payments, avoided vehicle crashes, avoided congestion and pollution, increased central city labor opportunities, increased mobility for people without access to private vehicles, and improved educational opportunities.

"Another challenge we face is

taking care of our veterans as they return home from war. In my four years as Chair of the Veterans Affairs Committee, we accomplished a lot including increasing the funding for veterans programs to take into account the growing and changing needs of veterans.

"We have reduced the VA claims backlog and we are able to better serve our veterans of prior wars and those returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan today. In fact, between 2007 and 2011, the number of veterans enrolled in the VA health care system has increased from 7,833,445 to 8,499,160.

"I commend the President for focusing on reducing the deficit. One of the ways we can reduce our spending right now is by bringing our troops home.

"Since 9/11, our nation has spent \$1.121 trillion on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are spending \$5.4 billion a month in Iraq and \$5.7 billion a month in Afghanistan. This is a misuse of our national resources and taxpayer funding!